

CUSTOMER POOL

Newsletter 2017

EDITION 1, 2017

Welcome... • to the first issue
of Customer Pool
Newsletter of 2017

**What is the
Customer Pool
and how does
it work?**



The Customer Pool is a group of people who have registered that they are interested in improving council housing services. We keep in touch with members and regularly ask for their views and involvement in service improvement projects. We try to make sure there is a wide range of ways to get involved. This includes focus group work, meetings or answering questions over the telephone or online.

Our House of Involvement

Housing Management Board

Customer Scrutiny Panel

Resident Inspectors

Individual housing service groups
and local community groups

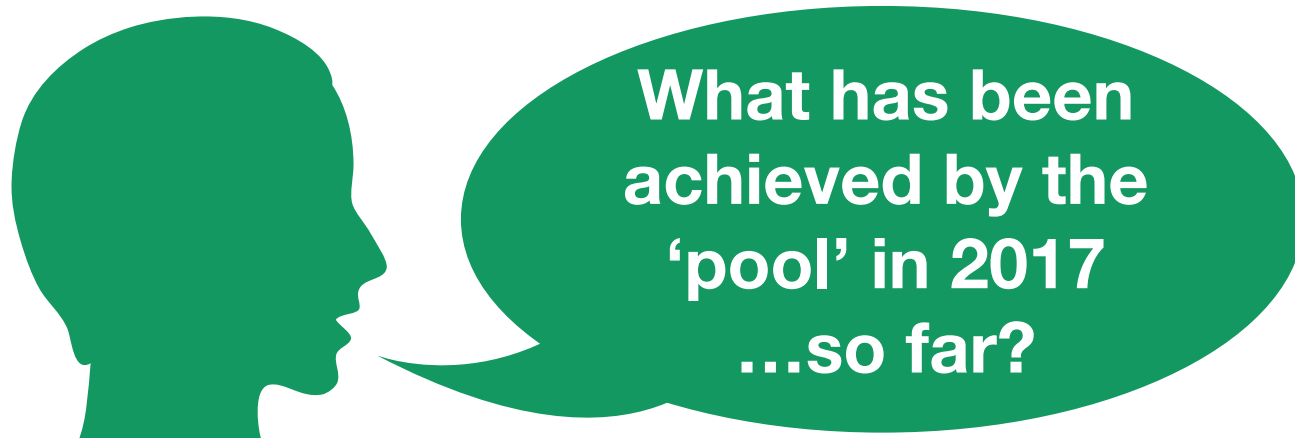
Customer Pool

Up to 10 hours
a month

As much or
little time

Our commitment to 'pool' members is to:

- Keep you updated about the ways you can help improve housing services
- Make sure we offer you a variety of ways to get involved and give your views
- Keep you informed about how your involvement has made a difference to services.



Customers from the 'pool' have taken part in a number of one off projects including:

- Focus groups to kick start bigger projects such as how we manage processes for aids & adaptations to homes for those with disabilities and caretaking services offered in flat blocks.
- Proof reading documents, such as the recent tenant's annual report and letters sent out about tenant arrears.
- Commenting on the choices offered when a home has a new kitchen.

Read what some of our other groups have been doing:

Disability Advisory Panel

This group concentrate on how housing services can affect people with disabilities.

Recent work includes:

- Highlighting to council contractors issues with silent disabilities, such as autism
- Raising issues about wheelie bins being left on pavements after being emptied - making it difficult for people with wheelchairs to get past. The result was that refuse operators have been re-trained.
- Working with the council to provide safe access for people with wheelchairs during Christmas lights 'switch-on' event.

Local Resident Groups

Local resident groups hold regular meetings in the neighbourhood where they live. Local issues are discussed and campaign for change takes place. These meetings are often attended by councillors and police officers. Below are the Resident Groups we are aware of and where and when they meet. If we have missed any group – please let us know.

Resident Group	Location
Pin Green	7pm on the last Thursday of each month at Hampson Park Community Centre
Shephall Resident	6:30pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Shephall Community Centre
St Nicholas & Martins Wood	6pm on the first Tuesday of every other month at the Oval community Centre
Bragbury End	6:30pm on the first Monday of each month at Bragbury Centre
Roebuck and Marymead	7pm on the third Tuesday of every other month at Pinewoods, Shephall Lane
Bedwell	6:45pm on the first Tuesday of each month at the Bedwell Community Centre

The Chairs' of each of the resident groups meet at the council offices once a month to discuss and share ideas on joint events in order to get more of the community involved and have their say on improvements for the local community. They are currently working on a stand they are having at Stevenage Day and how they can contribute to Volunteers Week and the World Tea Party.

Resident Inspectors

Resident Inspectors make a difference to housing services by:

- Carrying out council flat block inspections, highlighting to the council issues and unresolved issues in communal areas
- Carrying out mystery shopping, including monitoring the Anti-Social Behaviour team's processes and procedures
- Coming along to pop-up focus groups such as a recent meeting to discuss how aids and adaptations processes could be improved
- Monitoring repairs satisfaction surveys to ensure the council's approach to measuring customer satisfaction is effective.

Resident Inspectors want to recruit more volunteers. If you are interested, please contact the resident involvement team for more information.



This panel carry out housing service reviews of their choice. In the last year they have scrutinised and made recommendations for improvements in the following areas:

- Former tenants arrears and charges – how does the process work?
- The Customer Service Centre – is it welcoming and do processes work?
- Ensuring that previous review recommendations are actioned
- The 'panel' are currently reviewing how gas contractor's role works for customers.

Housing Management Board (HMB)

The board consists of five tenants and one leaseholder who work together with five councillors and two senior housing staff. They are involved in setting the housing business plan and work on housing strategies and policies. Recent areas discussed include: the repairs service improvement project, the damp and condensation policy and a new approach to managing empty homes.

HMB are writing and producing their annual report. Look out for it on our website soon.

Council news....

Major Refurbishment Contract

The Council are planning a major refurbishment programme to council flat blocks (excluding the tower blocks). The work needed on each flat block will be determined when a stock condition survey is carried out but may include:

- Roofs
- Structural repairs and alterations
- Windows
- Door entry
- Lighting, fire safety etc. in communal areas.

It is anticipated that the work will be carried out over 5 years commencing in 2018. Look out for further updates in these newsletters.

Neighbourhood Wardens

The Council has recently appointed three Neighbourhood Wardens who will be out and about acting as “eyes and ears” in your community. Initially they will cover Pin Green, Bedwell, Shephall, Bandle Hill, St Nicholas and Martins Wood.

For more information on their role you can email them on neighbourhood.warden@stevenage.gov.uk

Upcoming events

Music in the Park

Saturday 24 June – 6-9pm at Hampson Park

Shephall Feté

Saturday 1 July at Shephall Green

Bragbury Centre Fun Day

Saturday 15 July

Teddy Bear's picnic

Wednesday 26 July at Hampson Park – check the community centre website for more details.

Town Centre Garden events

Check the council website for more details.

And finally, we would love your feedback on this edition and your ideas of what could be included for the next newsletter. You can either call us on 01438 242183 or email resident.involvement@stevenage.gov.uk.

We have provided a prepaid envelope if you prefer to write to us.

Please send us your comments by 30 June 2017.